

Clean Copy of Amended Claims:

a¹ 6. (Amended) A rubber compound, comprising:

at least one elastomer containing a natural or synthetic rubber, and
at least one high density metal oxide filler,

wherein the metal oxide filler is selected from the group consisting of $M_n(O)_{2n}$, $M_n(O)_{3n/2}$, $(M_1)_n(M_2)_n(O)_{2n}$, and combinations thereof, where M is a metal selected from Groups IVA, VA, IB, VIB, VIIB and VIIIB metals (with M_1 being different from M_2), O is oxygen, and n is the valence of the metal, and
wherein the metal oxide filler has a density of greater than 5.7 g/cm^3 .

a² 12. (Amended) The rubber compound of Claim 6 wherein the amount of metal oxide within the rubber compound ranges from about 5 to about 80 phr.

13. (Amended) The rubber compound of Claim 6, wherein the high density metal oxide filler has a density of greater than about 8 g/cm^3 .

a³ 18. (Amended) A method of preparing the rubber compound of Claim 6, comprising the step of mixing at least one natural or synthetic rubber with at least one high density metal oxide filler, wherein the metal oxide filler is selected from the group consisting of $M_n(O)_{2n}$, $M_n(O)_{3n/2}$, $(M_1)_n(M_2)_n(O)_{2n}$, and combinations thereof, and wherein M is a metal selected from Groups IVA, VA, IB, VIB, VIIB and VIIIB metals (where M_1 and M_2 are different metals); O is oxygen; and n is the valence of the metal and wherein the metal oxide filler has a density of greater than 5.7 g/cm^3 .

a⁴ 20. The method of Claim 18 wherein the high density metal oxide is bismuth trioxide.